

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT, HAPPINESS, AND OPTIMISM  
AS CORRELATES OF WELL-BEING AMONG DUAL-  
WORKING AND SINGLE-WORKING WOMEN

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**Abstract**

The present research aimed at finding out the difference between single and dual career women on well-being, marital adjustment and optimism. For this purpose a total of 100 women were taken on incidental basis from East Delhi. Among them there were 50 working women and 50 non-working women. Their age ranged from 30 to 40 years. Working women were those working in different schools and their husbands were working in private companies, while single-career women were not working anywhere except in their homes and their husband's pay was equal to the total pay of husbands and wives of the working group. Results of t-test showed that dual-career women had significantly better well-being than single-career women, while on marital adjustment, happiness and optimism dual-career women & single-career women did not differ significantly. Further, multiple regression analysis suggested that marital adjustment, happiness and optimism together contributed 21% variance in well-being of dual-career women, but marital adjustment and optimism individually did not contribute any significant variance in well-being of dual-career women. Only happiness contributed individually 47% variance in their well-being. However, they did not count any significant variance together or individually in the well-being of single-career women.

**Keywords:** Marital Adjustment, Happiness, Optimism, Well-Being, Dual-Career Married Women, Single-Career Married Women.

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Well-being has been defined as a dynamic state characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between individual's abilities, need and expectations and environmental conditions (Levi, 1987). In 1961, Dunn used the term wellness and provided an early definition of the term that is now taken synonymously with the term well-being. Wellness is an active process through which one becomes aware of, and makes choices that one hopes will lead to a more fulfilling more successful, more well life. As such, wellness is an approach that emphasises the whole person, not just a biological organism (Hettler, 1984). Wellness implies a lifestyle with a sense of balance. This sense of balance arises from a balance, or harmony within each aspect or dimension of life (Lowdon, Davis, Dickie & Fergusson (1995). Wellness or a sense of well-being includes one's ability to live and work effectively and to make a significant contribution to society (Corbin & Lindsey, 1997).

Well-being is a state of successful performance throughout the life course integrating physical, cognitive, social and emotional functions that results in productive activities deemed significant by one's cultural community, fulfilling social relationships, and the ability to transcend and moderate psychosocial and environmental problems. Well-being also has a subjective dimension in the sense of satisfaction associated with fulfilling one's potential. (Bornstein, Davidson Keynes and Moore, 2003). Subjective well-being is usually seen as having two correlated components: judgments of life satisfaction (assessed globally as well as in specific domains such as relationships, health, work, and leisure), and affect balance, or having a preponderance of positive feelings and relatively few or rare negative feelings (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Schimmack, 2008).

Kenry and Kim (2002) examined the relationship between marriage and psychological well-being and found strong effects of marital status on psychological well-being. Diener, Suh, Oishi and Carol (2000) conducted a study to find out relations between marital status and subjective well-being and found them to be very similar across the world. Although cultural variables were found to alter the size of certain relations between marital status and subjective well-being, the effect sizes were very small. Specifically, in terms of life satisfaction, the benefit of marriage over cohabitation was greater in collectivist than in individualist nations. In terms of positive emotions, the benefit of being married over being divorced or separated was smaller in collectivist than in individualist nations

Demo and Acock (1996) examined three dimensions of mothers' well-being (personal happiness, self-esteem, and depression) across four diverse family structures (first-married, remarried, divorced, and continuously single-parent families). The results indicated that the strongest predictors of mothers' well-being are measures of family relations, especially children's well-being, marital happiness, marital stability, and low levels of marital conflict. . Hasnain, Wazid and Hasan (2014) found that hope contributed 63% variance to psychological well-being and happiness contributes 50% variance to psychological well-being in Assamese young adult females. Males were found better on happiness and females were found better on well-being than their counterparts.

Burgess and Cottrell (1939) defined marital adjustment as the integration of the couple in a union in which the two personalities are not merely merged, or sub-merged, but interact to complement each other for mutual satisfaction and the achievement of common objectives. According to Schneider (1960), "marital adjustment means the ability to meet day- to- day demands, vicissitudes and responsibilities of marriage with whatever degree of emotional equanimity and efficiency is required at the time. It involves getting along with and enjoying the companionship of marital partner, participating in the interest and activities of the family group, accepting additional responsibilities as they arise, changing ones style of life to correspond with changes in the family life". This definition shows that the responsibilities to adjust in marital life requires more ability and willingness to change due to continuous change in the family. Husband and wife change not only physically but psychologically also as they get older. The family structure, pattern of relations and life style of living also change constantly due to many factors such as addition of children, financial conditions etc. The marital adjustment is in a way to keep up with all these unobserved and gradual changes. Nonetheless, marital quality is seen to be more inclusive and includes such dimensions as communication, happiness, integration and satisfaction with the relationship. Johnson, White, Edwards & Booth (1986) specified five components of marital quality as marital happiness, interaction, disagreements, problems and instability.

Jamabo and Ordu (2012) examined marital adjustment of working class and non-working class women and found that both working class and non-working class women exhibit no clear difference in their marital adjustment. Nathawat & Mathur (1993) compared marital adjustment and subjective well-being in Indian-educated housewives and working women. Results indicated significantly better marital adjustment and subjective well-being for the working women than for the housewives. Specifically, working women reported higher scores on general health, life satisfaction, and self-esteem measures and lower scores on hopelessness, insecurity, and anxiety, compared with the housewives, although the housewives had lower scores on negative affect than the working women.

Hashmi, Khurshid and Hassan (2006) investigated the relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression and found that working married women face more problems in their married life as compared to non-working married women. Further, highly educated working and non-working married women perform well in their married life and are free from depression as compared to educated working and non-working married women.

Happiness is an emotional or affective state that is characterized by the feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction. As a state and a subject, it has been pursued and commented on extensively throughout world history. This reflects the universal importance that humans place on happiness. Altson and Dudley (1987) proposed that happiness is the ability to enjoy one's experiences, accompanied by a degree of excitement. Argyle, Martin and Crossland (1989) believe that happiness is composed of three related components: positive affect, absence of negative affect and satisfaction with life as a whole. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define happiness as that emotion which results from making reasonable progress towards the realization of a goal.

Isanejad, Ahmadi, Bahrami, Cichani, Etemadi, Feraj & Adigan (2011) tried to investigate the effect of relationship enhancement on improving optimism and marital happiness. The results showed that relationship enhancement effectively leads to improving optimism and marital happiness. Segerstrom and Sephton (2010) found that optimism is associated with increased positive affect. They further found that optimists are generally happier with their lives than pessimists showing higher life satisfaction and lower negative affect. Studies conducted by

Assad, Kimberly, Donnellan, Brent, Conger, and Rand (2007) indicated that optimism is linked to satisfying and happy romantic relationships, and a substantial portion of this association is mediated by reports of cooperative problem solving. Moreover, optimism results in greater relationship satisfaction.

Optimism is defined as the cognitive disposition to expect favourable outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1985). It is defined as an expectation that an individual will most likely experience positive outcome (Gilham, 2000). Scheier and Carver (1985) have stated that optimism and pessimism are defined as generalized positive and negative outcome expectancies and represent relatively stable individual difference variable that promote psychological and physical well-being.

Scheier & Carver (1985) found that optimism is associated with lower social alienation and with longer lasting friendships. Helgeson (1994), Murray & Holmes (1997) conducted studies that suggested that in romantic relationships, optimism about a particular relationship predicts greater satisfaction in that relationship and reduced likelihood of relationship dissolution. Scheier, Carver & Bridges (2001) found that optimists and pessimists differ on feelings. Because optimists expect good outcomes, they are likely to experience a more positive mix of feelings. On the other hand, pessimists expect bad outcomes; therefore, they experience more negative feelings (anxiety, sadness, and despair). This study further indicated that optimists are psychologically better adjusted in relationships than their pessimistic counterparts.

The above discussion clearly reveals that well-being has positive leaning towards marital adjustment, happiness and optimism. However how they work in women of dual-career couples and single-career couples is not known. Moreover, what roles are played by marital adjustment, happiness and optimism in the well-being of women of dual-career couples and single-career couples, is also not clear. The present study is an attempt to explore the dynamics of these variables in the well-being of women of dual-career couples and women of single-career couples.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 100 women were taken on incidental basis. Among them 50 were dual-career women and 50 were single-career women. The working women were TGT's working in different schools of East Delhi and their husbands working in private companies in Delhi. Single-career women were not working anywhere except at home and their husband's pay was equal to the total pay of husbands and wives of dual-career group. Their age range was 30-40 years.

### Measures

#### PGI General Well-being Measure:

PGI General Well-Being scale (Verma and Verma, 1989) was used to measure the well-being of respondents. The scale has been designed to assess general and domain specific subjective well-being in various age groups. The scale contains 20 items and the respondents are required to tick 'yes' or 'no' as apply to them. The scoring is done by counting the number of ticks with scores ranging from 0 to 20.

The reliability coefficient by using Kuder-Richardson formula was found 0.98 ( $p < .01$ ) (Verma and Verma, 1983), while test-retest reliability was 0.91 ( $p < .01$ ) for the English version and 0.86 ( $p < .01$ ) for the Hindi version (Moudgil, Verma, Kaur & Pal, 1986). The scale showed reliability independence of the variables as expected but showed significant relation with another well-being scale, quality of life scale and to some extent with learned helplessness, the last is rather surprising and requires more work (Verma and Verma, 1989).

#### Marital Adjustment Questionnaire:

The marital adjustment questionnaire developed by Kumar and Rohatgi (1976) was used to measure the marital adjustment. The questionnaire was developed from content analysis of interview data from a group of 100 randomly drawn married couples relating to their concept of "Happy Married Life" and the factors which they thought affected it. The interview data were content analysed under the categories of personality qualities, emotional factors, sexual satisfaction, marital role and responsibility factors, in-law relationship, attitudes towards family

planning and children, interpersonal relationship and economic, religious and social factors. It is a 'yes' or 'no' type questionnaire. A score of 1 is given to every 'yes' underlined response of respondents. There are 25 items in this test with scores ranging from 0-25.

Split half reliability, applying Spearman formula was .49 (N=60) with an index of reliability of .70. Test-retest reliability was .71 (N=60) with an index of reliability of .84.

The content validity of the questionnaire had been assured by selecting items for which there was 100% agreement among the 10 judges (married couples) to whom the questionnaire was sent for approval. Only items showing high discriminating value following the item analysis were included in the final form of the questionnaire.

#### **Revised Oxford Happiness Scale:**

Revised Oxford Happiness scale by Argyle and Hills (2002) was used to measure the happiness of two groups of women. The scale contains 29 items. It is the revised version of Oxford Happiness inventory and short form of Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989). It is a six-point Likert Scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. Scores from 1-6 are given to the responses. There are six reverse items which are scored in reverse order. The internal consistency reliability and test-retest reliability of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire short-form was found by administering the test among 55 Northern Irish undergraduate university students who completed the measure on two occasions separated by two weeks. Internal consistency of the measure on both occasions was satisfactory at both Time 1 ( $\alpha = .62$ ) and Time 2 ( $\alpha = .58$ ).

#### **Life Orientation Test-revised (LOT-R):**

The Life Orientation Test (Scheier, Carver and Bridges, 1985) was developed to assess individual differences in generalised optimism versus pessimism. Although the LOT was widely used, it had some problems. Most important, its original items did not all focus as explicitly on expectations for the future as theory dictated. In part to remedy this deficiency Scheier, Carver, & Bridges developed a modest revision of the LOT, called LOT-R. The Life Orientation Test – Revised (LOT-R; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) is a 10-item scale, with four filler items and

six scale items. LOT-R Total scores are calculated by summing the three positively worded and three negatively worded items (these are reverse coded). Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with 10 of the items on a 4-point scale, using the response format, “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Items 3, 7, and 9 are reverse scored (or scored separately as a pessimism measure). Items 2, 5, 6, and 8 are fillers and are not to be scored. This gives a possible range of 6-24, with higher scores indicating more optimism.

Scheier, Carver and Bridges(1994) reported an internalconsistency reliability coefficient of .78 for an undergraduate sample. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of reliability were 0.70 for optimism, 0.74 for pessimism for a Cronbach’s alpha total of 0.68. Test-retest correlations were .68, .60, .56, .79 respectively, suggesting fair stability over time. Item-scale correlations ranged from .43 to .63 indicating that items are partially assessing the same underlying construct yet are not redundantly competing for the same variance. In regards to face validity, the filler items do a relatively good job in disguising the purpose of the study and scored items appear to be measuring optimism and pessimism.

## Result

t-test and stepwise regression analysis were used to analyse the data. Results and their discussions are given in the following pages.

**Table-1: Mean, SD, SED and t between mean well-being, marital adjustment, happiness and optimism scores of single-career and dual -career married women**

Variables	Comparisons	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Well-being	Single-career women	50	11.08	4.56	2.57	<.01
	Dual-careerwomen	50	13.44	4.61		
Marital	Single-	50	18.44	4.22		



Adjustment	careerwomen				1.02	>.05
	Dual - career women	50	19.34	4.56		
Happiness	Single-careerwomen	50	119.2	18.46	1.27	>.05
	Dual-careerwomen	50	123.4	14.10		
Optimism	Single-careerwomen	50	16.52	2.89	1.38	>.05
	Dual-careerwomen	50	17.22	2.11		

If we look at table 1, the mean value for well-being of single-career and dual-career women came out to be 11.08 and 13.44 and their SDs were 4.56 and 4.61 respectively. The t-value was 2.57 which was significant at 0.01 level. . In this comparison, dual-careerwomen had significantly better well-being than single-careerwomen.

On comparing marital adjustment among single-career and dual-career women in Table 1 , we see that the, means of single-career and dual-career women were 18.44 and 19.34and their SDs were 4.22 and 4.56 respectively. The t-value came out to be 1.02, which was not significant at

.05 level of significance. It means that dual-careerwomen & single-career women did not differ significantly in their marital adjustment.

A comparison between single-career and dual-career women on happiness reveals that means of single-career and dual-career women were 119.2 and 123.4, their SDs were 18.46 and 14.10 respectively. The corresponding t-value was 1.27, which was not significant at .05 level of significance. It means that dual-career women & single-career women did not differ in their mean happiness scores.

A perusal of above table shows that mean optimism scores of single-career women and dual-career women were 16.52 and 17.2, their SDS were 2.89 and 2.11 respectively. The t-value was found to be 1.38 which was not significant at .05 level of significance meaning thereby that single-career women & dual-career women did not differ significantly in their mean optimism scores.

**Table 2 : Prediction of well-being among dual-career married women**

Model	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta		
(Constant)		.588	>.05
Marital adjustment	-.017	.115	>.05
Happiness	.474	3.211	<.01
Optimism	-.038	.285	>.05

$$R^2 = 21.3, F = 4.159, p .01$$

A perusal of Table 2 shows that around 21% variance in well-being of dual-career women was counted by marital adjustment, happiness and optimism together. When stepwise regression analysis was carried out it was found that significantly 47% variance of well-being of dual-careerwomen was counted by happiness. The other two variables did not count any significant variance in well-being of dual career women.

**Table 3: Multiple regression for prediction of well-being among single-career married women.**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.
.239	.057	.931	>.05

On computing regression analysis, the R value was found to be .239 for well-being of singlecareer women. This indicates a poor correlation between the predictor variables which include marital adjustment, happiness and optimism with well-being among single-career women. The R<sup>2</sup>value for the same was found to be .057. The corresponding F value was .931 which was not significant at 0.05 level. It means that only 5.7 % variance was counted by all the predictors together. Thus, marital adjustment, happiness and optimism did not emerge as significant predictors of well-being among single-careerwomen.

## Discussion

The results indicate that dual-career women had better well-being as compared to single-career women. The result is in contradiction with previous studies which indicated working women had to face more problems in their married life as compared to non-working married women (Hashim, Khurshid and Hassan, 2007). The majority of working mothers are mildly or seriously anxious and depressed as compared to non-working mothers (Adhikari,2012). Working women are more stressed as compared to non-working women (Harshpinder and Aujla,2006).

However, the findings of the present study are in consonance with findings of other studies where it was found that women who work full-time experience less anxiety and depression and better physical health than full-time homemakers, and their husbands are more involved with caring for them and their children (Barnett & Rivers, 1996). This is because work provides men and women a buffer for the stresses in the home, a network of social relations, and opportunities for meaningful engagement and success that are not available to those who are not employed (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Moreover, working for pay is crucial to the economic viability of middle-class families. Not only are two wages often necessary to adequately provide opportunities for the fulfilment of needs of most families, dual-earner couples are less economically vulnerable than single-earner families, for whom a lay-off can mean financial collapse. In such conditions, routine and responsibility of things outside of one's control are associated with greater depressive symptoms among all women, independently from their work status (Lennon, 1994).

The mean of marital adjustment scores of single-career and dual-career women came to be non-significant. Aminjafari, Padash, Baghban & Abed (2012) whose results indicated that marital adjustment was higher in dual career families as compared to single-careers and a study conducted by Nathawat and Mathur (1993), indicated significantly better marital adjustment and subjective well-being for the working women than for the housewives. However, study conducted by Jamabo and Ordu (2012) supports the finding of the present study. In this study they found that both working and non-working class women exhibit no clear difference in their marital adjustment. It seems that marital adjustment being a crucial factor in the sustenance and continuance of successful married life is equally important for the women without any consideration of anything else. Hence, non-significant difference is exhibited between single and dual career women on adjustment.

The t-ratio between mean of happiness scores of single-career and dual-career women was found non-significant. Thus, though dual-career women seem to be more happy than single-career women as their mean is higher than that of single-career women, but the difference between two means was obtained non-significant meaning thereby that the two groups had almost equal degree of happiness. The finding of the present study is in contradiction with results of Booth and

Ours (2008) who found that the married women who took part-time jobs tend to be happier than women who took full time jobs or chose to be housewives. Hasnain, Ansari and Sethi (2011) obtained significantly greater life satisfaction for working women than for non-working women. It shows that happiness being more related with the feelings, both groups of women are equally concerned with the enjoyment and happiness in their life

The t- ratio between mean of optimism scores of single-career and dual-career women was also found non-significant. It seems that the Indian society, particularly the half population, i.e., women as a whole, whether they are single earners or dual earners seem to have crossed over the conditions of uncertainty and double-mindedness, which is a healthy sign of progress. This might have happened because of the economic liberalization and open market resulting into price hike. However, studies show that middle class dual career woman are burdened with work at home and at work place which induces anxiety in working women (Mukhopadhyay, 1993), daily hassels (Thakar & Mihsra, 1995) and depression (Upmanyu & Reen, 1999). Thus, findings of the present study negate the results of these mentioned studies.

R value shown in Table 2 suggested a moderate correlation between all the predictor variables, i.e., marital adjustment, happiness and optimism with criterion variable well-being among dual-career working women. The  $R^2$  value for the same came out to be .213, suggesting that significantly 21% of change in well-being can be predicted by the predictor variables together in well-being of dual-working women. This contradicts the findings of studies conducted by researchers that suggest middle class dual career woman are burdened with work at home and at work place which induces anxiety in working women (Mukhopadhyay, 1993), daily hassels (Thakar & Mishra, 1995) and depression (Upmanyu & Reen, 1991).

The beta value for happiness was 0.474 and t was 3.211 which was significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that happiness contributes 47.4% significant variance to the well-being of dual-career women and it has emerged as a very important predictor of well-being in them. Researches indicate that division of household labour between men and women are directly and indirectly linked to depression: performing larger amounts of routine and repetitive housework is associated with more frequent depression among women (Barnett and Shen, 1997; Glass and Fujimoto, 1994; Golding, 1990; Larson, Richards & Jenkins, 1994). It denotes that happiness which comes out of the work by dual-career women and their contribution to the

overall condition of the home gives a kind of satisfaction which moderates the depression, hassles and other negative effects among dual –careerwomen. Hence, they show better well-being than single-career women. All the other variables emerged as not significant predictors. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Hasnain,et.al.(2014) who found that 53% variance in well-being of young adult Asamese females were counted by happiness.

Table 3 indicates R value of .239 for single-careerworking women. This indicates a poor correlation between the predictor variables with well-being of single-working women. The  $R^2$  value for the same was found to be .057 suggesting that only 5% of variance in well-being can be counted by the predictor variables for single- careerwomen. Their F value was .931 which was not significant at .05 level. We can thus infer that the predictor variables together did not count significant percentage of variance in the well-being of single-careerwomen. This means that marital adjustment, happiness and optimism play a small and non-significant role in predicting variance in well-being of single-working married women. This result of the study is in consonance with the results of studies conducted by Hessami, (2010); Wright (1978); Lennon (1994); Klumb and Lampert (2004) and Ferree (1984) who also found no effect of homemaking on well-being on housewives. Whereas the finding contradicts with those of others who found negative (Brereton,Clinch& Ferreira, 2008) or positive effect (Stokes and Peyton, 1986).

The findings of the present study confirm the view that homemaking seems to relate to psychological well-being in a more complex way than unemployment. Housewives presumably lose the psychological benefits of paid work, such as self-esteem, prestige and social recognition, opportunities for social interaction and building networks. Indeed, according to Bird and Ross (1993) and Lennon (1994) homemaking is associated with less - both intrinsic and extrinsic - gratification and rewards than paid work. Also character of work performed by housewives is specific: more routine, more physically exhausting and with more work interruptions. Other researches shows that doing housework correlates with higher depression rates and lower well-being (Sironi and Mencarini, 2010; Glass and Fujimoto, 1994; &Golding, 1990). Moreover, homemaking implies more autonomy, less time pressure and less responsibility for things outside one's control than paid employment (Lennon, 1994; Bird and Ross, 1993). This seems true for the findings of present study also.

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